

THE CUSTOM HOUSE

A Searching Investigation Ordered by
Secretary Bristow.

STARTLING DEVELOPMENTS EXPECTED.

Probable Removal of Many of
the Officials.

Among the passengers arriving in this city yesterday by the morning train from Washington was Mr. Henry G. Johnson, the Commissioner of Customs, who came unexpectedly, and proceeded quietly to the St. Nicholas Hotel, where he will probably remain concealed several days. The advent of the Commissioner will cause no end of commotion in certain official quarters, for it is rumored that Mr. Johnson comes to New York armed with important instructions from Mr. Bristow, the secretary of the treasury, for the purpose of instituting a personal examination into the practical workings of the New York Custom House in all its branches. This investigation is ordered by the Secretary of the Treasury, in order to more intelligently prepare for important and radical changes in the administration of affairs in the Custom House. It has been long felt that a change was necessary in the manner of conducting the business of the general government, in the way of collecting the customs and enforcing the laws governing duties in all classes of imported goods coming to this port. Not only have merchants of reputation expressed such belief, but it has been entertained in high official circles.

THE EXACT DISCLOSURES

Made by the government officers relative to the case of Lawrence, who was so recently brought from Europe to answer voluminous charges of having smuggled goods on an extensive scale, show clearly that the Secretary of the Treasury is aware that such colossal frauds on the revenues of the federal government could not have been so successfully carried on had not some collusion existed between the smugglers and some of the officials entrusted with the responsible duty of seeing that goods were not passed without payment of the lawful customs. Indeed, it has been a subject of wonderment in mercantile circles that steps were not taken long ago to insure the honest payment of dues, for nearly all the leading importers of valuable light goods have been aware that their markets were undermined and ruined by the operations of smugglers. Yet they could get no respite, even when the matter was mentioned to those whose business it was to see the laws against smuggling enforced. On the contrary these merchants were numbered and included.

A DECIDED CHANGE.

It is understood on the best authority that Mr. Johnson, the Commissioner of Customs, expects to receive this morning, through the mail, additional and definite instructions, as well as important information, to enable him to fully and intelligently carry out the will and purpose of Secretary Bristow. Those who appear to be familiar with the scope of the proposed reorganization of the New York Custom House, state that should the developments to be made confirm the suspicions of Mr. Bristow, the result will be astounding to many persons now in quiet possession of fat and lucrative offices. It is claimed that parties who have long been regarded as actually necessary to the customs service will find their tenure of office to be of exceedingly short duration, and the changes contemplated will not only be decisive in their nature, but sweeping in character and extent.

In fact, there is no question but that the visit of Commissioner Johnson means business in every sense of the word, and it is spoken in government circles as a continuation of the startling reforms so recently inaugurated in the Internal Revenue Department of the Treasury. The developments of the next few days will, no doubt, be watched with deep interest by those who are in any way interested in an honest administration in this port of the customs laws of the United States. Who are to be hit or who will be among the wounded can only be known when the Secretary of the Treasury takes official action in the premises.

OBITUARY.

GENERAL JOHN G. BRECKINRIDGE.

Lexington, Ky., May 17, 1875.

A telegraphic despatch announces that General John C. Breckinridge died yesterday afternoon at his home in Lexington, Ky., where he had resided since his return from abroad in 1868. He had been in feeble health for a long time previous to his demise, and it was hoped that with the return of spring his condition would improve, but this hope was to be disappointed.

John B. Skillman, a civil engineer of great ability and experience, died yesterday in Jersey City, in the forty-fifth year of his age. He was born in Westchester county, where he youth was spent. Subsequently he resided for some years at Saratoga, N. Y., and then became engaged in construction. For the past eighteen years he has been employed by the Erie Railway company, and during the last five years he has held the position of chief agent in charge of the New York division of the railroad. He was a man of high rank and his attractive manners won for him the sincere respect and affection of the large body of employees under his charge. He leaves a wife, but no children.

GEORGE LORILLARD RONALD.

Mr. George L. Ronalds, whose death is announced by cable despatch as having occurred in Paris on Saturday last, was in the forty-second year of his life, a native of this city and the son of the late Thomas C. Ronalds, his mother being the sister of Messrs. George and Pierre Lorillard. Mr. Ronalds was a gentleman of large wealth and well known here, especially from his great scientific attainments, though for many years of his residence in Europe. Last winter he died at Rome. Mr. Ronalds had been stricken with heart disease and advised to go to Paris for treatment. The journey was accompanied by easy stages, but the disease made rapid progress; and although Mr. Ronalds desired to be brought home, he was unable to do so. His son, the deceased gentleman married a daughter of Mr. H. F. Witherspoon, of this city, whom he leaves to mourn his loss. Colonel and Mrs. Kip, the sister and brother-in-law of Mr. Ronalds, were with him at the time of his death.

MELANCTHON S. WICKWARE.

Few men in Jersey City, where the subject of this sketch resided for many years, illustrated to a greater degree the checkered career which so often attends the pursuit of wealth. Mr. Wickware was an Alderman of Jersey City ten years ago, and was afterward a member of the Board of Education for several terms and later still was Clerk of that board. He came on the wharfes of New York and New Haven, and was a man of moderate property. During the past few years his accumulations during the most active period of his life were swept away, and he was reduced to penury. Two months ago he accepted the position of bookkeeper at the Almshouse at Elizabethtown, and his friends to follow his profession in his native state. He accordingly settled at Georgetown, Ky., where he practised law, and in 1844, during the Polyx canvas, he first took an active interest in politics.

Some time after the Mexican war broke out Mr. Breckinridge was among the first to offer his services to his State. Governor Owings gave him a commission as major in the Kentucky regiment, and he was soon to join the army in Mexico. On May 10, 1846, he was promoted to the rank of major in the 1st U. S. Cavalry, and was elected to Congress as a representative from Kentucky. Major Breckinridge found the war virtually at an end, and after doing garrison duty with his regiment for some time he returned home. He had, however, been promoted to the rank of colonel in the army during his brief stay in the city of Mexico, and his successful defence of General Pillow before a court of inquiry made him much reputation.

After his return from Mexico Mr. Breckinridge was offered the position of adjutant general of Kentucky, but he declined it without interruption. In 1849 he was elected to the Kentucky Legislature, representing among his supporters Henry Clay, who abhorred politics in his behalf, and was succeeded in his seat by John C. Breckinridge. He was re-elected, however, and the next year (1851) he was elected to Congress in a wing district and over a candidate personally popular. General George C.大胆, his competitor, The contest was very sharp, and the election was decided in his favor.

EDWARD CLARKE.

This gentleman, who was among the old hardware merchants of Paterson, N. J., died suddenly on Saturday night after reaching his home from his place of business. He was attacked about three years ago with paralysis from which he never fully recovered, and his sudden death is attributed to a repetition of the attack.

A BURGLAR SHOT AT.

Yesterday afternoon John Crawford, aged twenty-one years, forced an entrance into the premises No. 112 Grand street and stole a suit of clothes, watch, pocket, chains, \$50 in money and some silver pieces from the apartments of Mrs. Amelia Johnson. Just as he was making his way out met the lady, who instantly gave the alarm, and Officer Fickett gave chase to the thief. After running four blocks, ending in the man was increasing the distance between them. Fickett shot at him and fired twice, one shot striking Crawford in the leg and bringing him to ground. Crawford acknowledged his guilt at once, and on being taken to the station house and searched, in addition to the property of Mrs. Johnson, he had in his pocket \$100 in gold and silver, and \$100 in silver coins.

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NAVAL INTELLIGENCE.

Advices from Yokohama, Japan, of the 20th of April, report as follows:—The United States steamer Aspinwall is detained at Nagasaki in consequence of the explosion of her cylinder, and several weeks will be required for repairs.

Mr. Breckinridge's table brilliancy, and as showed

in his speech at the legislative session,

NEW YORK STATE SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

WATERTOWN, May 17, 1875.
The seventeenth Annual Convention of the New York State Sportsmen's Association will commence in this city on May 31.

PRINTING CLOTHS MARKET.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., May 16, 1875.
Printing cloths continue very dull. Standard and extra class are quoted at 35c., with a weak market.

SHIPPING NEWS.

OCEAN STEAMERS.

DATES OF DEPARTURE FROM NEW YORK FOR THE MONTH OF MAY AND JUNE.

Steamer.	Days.	Destination.	Office.
Wisconsin	18.	Brownsville	Port
Denmark	19.	London	49 Broadway
Keynes	19.	Brownsville	Port
Westphalia	20.	Brownsville	60 Broadway
W. Schell	20.	Riga	Broadway
Hawkins	21.	Brownsville	Port
Hawkins	22.	Brownsville	19 Broadway
Godey	22.	Brownsville	Port
Russia	23.	Bremen	2 Bowring Green
F. Land	23.	Brownsville	4 Bowring Green
Ville de Paris	25.	Brownsville	19 Broadway
Reina	25.	Brownsville	Port
Wyoming	26.	Brownsville	19 Broadway
City of Brussels	27.	Brownsville	Port
The Queen	28.	Brownsville	19 Broadway
Elysia	29.	Brownsville	Port
Alma	29.	Brownsville	19 Broadway
Leviathan	30.	Brownsville	Port
City of Paris	31.	Brownsville	19 Broadway
Perseverance	1.	Brownsville	5 Broadway
Doubs	2.	Bremen	2 Bowring Green
Celtic	3.	Brownsville	19 Broadway
City of Berlin	4.	Brownsville	Port

—NOTICE TO CAPTAINS OF VESSELS ENTERING THE PORT OF NEW YORK AT NIGHT.—The New York Herald has adopted a distinguishing Coast night signal for use on board the Hixton steam yacht, showing while burning the colors red, green, red, changing from one to the other in succession, and can be seen several miles distant. Captain of vessels upon seeing this signal will oblige us by preparing any marine signals they may have for the ship News Department of the Herald.

—Persons desirous of communicating with vessels arriving at New York can do so by addressing to such vessel care of Herald news yacht, pier No. 1 East River. Letters received from all parts of the world and promptly delivered. Duplicates are required.

ALMANAC FOR NEW YORK—THIS DAY.

DAY AND MOON.	HIGH WATER.
Sun moon.....	4:41 Gov. Island...morn
Sun sets.....	7:12 Sandy Hook...morn
Moon sets....morn	8:07 Hell Gate....morn

PORT OF NEW YORK, MAY 17, 1875.

CLEARED.

Steamer Steinmann (Belg), Lecher, Antwerp—Portuguese Princess (Brazil), Lockwood, Rio Janeiro—Talley.

Steamer E. C. Price, Philadelphia—Jan. Hand—George H. Strouth, Philadelphia—F. A. Hinckley, Boston—J. A. Moore, New York.

Steamer Eleonora, Johnson, Portland—J. A. Moore, New York.

Steamer Hawkins, Hinckley, Boston—J. A. Moore, New York.

Steamer Hixton, Hinckley, Boston—J. A. Moore, New York.